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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS –ONE OF THE HOLISTIC EDUCATION COURSES OF YONSEI UNIVERSITY

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Intercultural Communication for Foreign Students – One of the Holistic Education Courses of Yonsei University.

Synopsis:

Introduction of special program for foreign students (Intercultural Communication for foreign students) which is one of the holistic education courses of Yonsei University, in Korea.

I will introduce the contents of this course, including how international students can get help about their campus life in Korea.

Inter-Cultural Communication for International Students - -- One of the Holistic Education Courses of Yonsei University.

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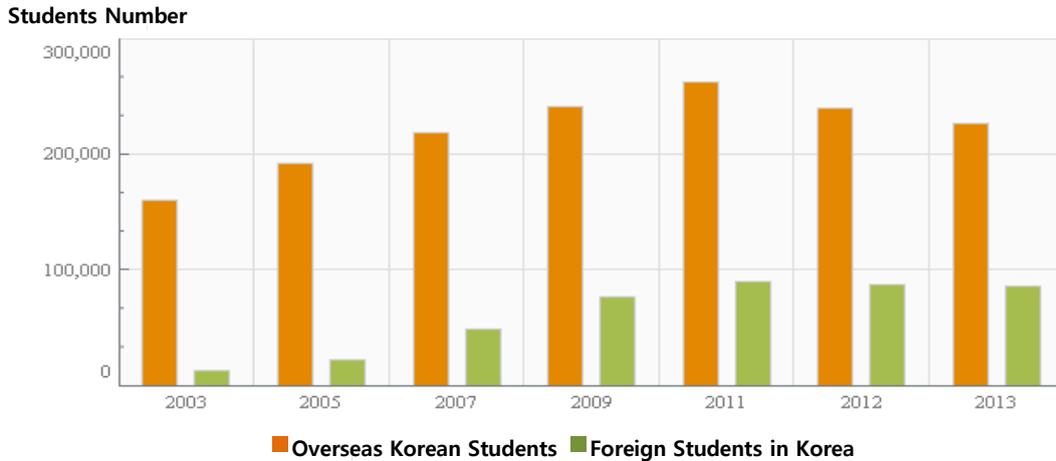
Underwood International College

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1. Introduction

With the status promotion of Korean and the influence of Korean wave, the number of international students in Korean Universities has been continuously increased. There are 56,715 students who are in academic curriculum (including bachelor, master and doctor's degree) of domestic universities- the number reaches to 85,925 counting students when counting foreigner studying Korean language or involved in other college programs. Numerous students underwent and have been in Yonsei University- 3,450 students in 2012, 3,585 students in 2013, and 3,653 students in 2014. The increase of international students appears not only in Yonsei but commonly in other ones as the major universities pursue internationalization of education environment.

'Study Korea Project'(2005) has been the factor intriguing foreign students coming to Korea- the expansion of scholarship and opportunity to take TOPIK for international students, various promotion for international learning environment, facilitation of immigration/emigration process. In other words, increase of international students, as presented in [graph 1], is the outcome of governmental effort to invite 200,000 students in 2020 so that it rectifies brain drain phenomena -the number of Korean students studying abroad surpasses foreign students in domestic colleges.



[Graph 1] Overseas Korean and Foreign students in Korea (in college) Status quo (2003~2013)

In addition to these efforts, the global image of corporations such as Samsung and LG has been improved, which resulted in surge of attention on Korea culture. More and more students of diverse nationalities are entering several higher education institutions in reflection of this trend.

Not only international students coming into Korea but Korean students themselves also confronted difficulties from limitation of administration system dealing with drastic influx of foreigners, relatively scarce educational experience with alien students and lack of embracement on diverse cultural backgrounds. While international students experience culture shock and difficulties when adapting to new education surrounding, Korean students undergo cultural conflicts when accommodating foreigners from diverse nations into their community members. Common hardships foreigner students mostly complain of is language barrier in and out of campus, maladjustment on Korean college culture and inadequate attitude of classmates or professors coming from short appreciation on other culture.

Korean students as well as university education policy face new problem which is to help entering international students to be prepared in theoretical and emotional aspects. Instructing the cultural context as a foundation of Korean culture and communication pattern is the key to anticipate possible hardships and get the students prepared to properly deal with the circumstance.

2. Goal

'Inter-Cultural Communication' course is for providing the basic understanding on general Korea culture, critical preparation for the foreign students when becoming as member of Yonsei University community. The core content would be theoretical explanation on successful enculturation process of overseas Korean- who studied 12 years curriculum abroad - and aliens. Further practical approach including introduction of how communication between different culture happens and communication manner of Koreans would be also covered in class.

This course is in HE (Holistic Education) 2, a culture and art district, though other classes are more related to music, art, drama and film. HE courses focuses on three domains- physical education, culture and art, and volunteering service, aiming for integral education system promoting 'whole person'(holistically-rounded person), international manner and creativity. The courses are implemented within Residential College, an Integration of Living & Learning system, composed of learning and various extracurricular activities after class

3. Course management

Diverse programs and curriculum are developed and implemented to assist understanding on and adaptation to Korean culture for international students. Kyeong-Hi University, for instance, opens 3 and 2 credit courses such as 'Korean history and culture for foreigners', 'Korean discourse and presentation skill', 'Alive Korean culture', 'Understanding Korean society', and 'Understanding Korean culture'. Chung-Ju University provides mentoring service in 'Understanding Korean culture for international students' that a professor is in charge of 3 students as their advisor.

Universities in North America have operated specialized courses for assisting foreign students' culture adaptation. University of Southern California introduces college culture in American society through course 'America101'. Syracuse University also has similar class called 'Global Leadership and Culture'.

Though their specific contents might vary, they aim for alleviating difficulties in learning,

cultural and daily living aspects. 'Inter-Cultural Communication for international students' was also developed in similar purpose of North American University courses, especially for appreciation of communication within culturally unique context in Korea.

Possible number of this course is 25 freshmen, containing different approaches according to the topics of each week such as lecture, individual presentation, group discussion and culture activity. It is 1 credit course but takes 2 hours per a week, and conducted in free atmosphere for discussion and presentation even when the students are not fluent in Korea since all students are overseas Korean or foreigner.

4. Course organization and Weekly topics

Most students enrolled in 'Inter-Cultural Communication for international students' are freshmen in first or second semester, undergoing adaptation process in different cultures or entering plateau. There are 4 steps in this class. Students think about their cultural identity in first step, and in next step, have opportunity to observe novel circumstance they are in. In third step, the introduction of general cultural context of Korea would be provided for understating inherent characteristics of communication in Korean, and students share various cultural conflict experiences to figure out the solution. They would make feedback on what they have learned about new environment in final step. This course is constructed to practice culture adaptation attitude 'Integration' based on John W. Berry's theory, so that they can become a member of society while sustaining cultural identity as a minority.

[1st step] Introducing my country and culture.

The first step is to introduce own cultural identity to other students, and seek similarity and difference between the cultures. By presenting their hometown, family, nation and culture, students can admit cultural identity and share sentiment as minority who feels isolation from dominating culture. After that, the class will continue within small group of 5~6 students who has different background- major, home country, and culture

[2nd step] Observation on new environment

Second step starts with going through theories on culture shock that numerous students would undergo and prescribing cultural adaptation stage they are in. Definition of culture

shock- suggested by Oberg, Edward Hall, Alvin Toffler- its symptom, feature and the culture adaptation procedure (proposed by Frumhan and Bochner) are the main points here. Then, students will compare the expectation they had when choosing Korea to come and reality they experience based on worksheet built by worksheet. Field trip to a place among traditional market, Han-ok (tradition building) village, and museums would promote friendship with foreign students from various countries. Group presentation after the trip will finalize this step.

[3rd step] Understanding the mode of communication in mainstream culture

3rd step begins with covering the cultural background of unique communication manner in Korean- familism, collectivism, authoritarianism and uniformity. Later, students will learn to understand nonverbal communication in Korean context, which is critical factor in communication as psychologist Albert Mehrabian said 93% of whole message and anthropologist Ray Burdwhistell insisted 65% of that is delivered by nonverbal communication. The course will provide opportunity to appreciate various hand and body expression that Korean and other county people use. Also, introducing the expression Korea students commonly use in Social Network Service would help international student to be able to involve in Cyber space community. The final activity in this step is performing drama about communication difficulties in Korea and discussing the solution for these situations.

[4th step] Find the lesson from evaluating the mainstream culture

Students will evaluate Korean society and culture in their perspective so that they interpret mainstream culture and selectively accept it using 'Integration' perspective. Group discussion and presentation with topic “Complimenting Korea/Korean”, and individual opinion on the class are the last part of entire course.

[Table 1] Weekly Syllabus of 'Inter-Cultural Communication for international students'

Week	Topics	Course contents
Week 1	1 st step	Course orientation and self introduction: country and culture of class members
Week 2	Introducing my country, my culture	Introducing my country and culture: Similarity and difference with Korea
Week 3	2 nd step Observation on new environment	Understanding culture shock and culture adaptation process with culture adaptation theory: Culture adaptation curve
Week 4		Korea that I knew, Korea that I experienced: When was the point that you realize that you are finally in Korea?
Week 5		Group field trip to experience traditional culture
Week 6		Presentation on group field trip
Week 7	3 rd step Understanding the mode of communication in mainstream culture	Characteristics of Korean culture and communication: Exploration into Korean cultural context for Effective Korean communication
Week 8		Contemplation on diverse nonverbal communication in Korean
Week 9		Hand and body expression in Korean and foreign nations: hand expression as main nonverbal communication source
Week 10		Online communication: SNS expression Korean college students use
Week 11		How can I solve conflict with Korean friends?: the conflict types and solutions
Week 12	4 th step Finding lesson by evaluating the	Complimenting Korea/Korean: Strong point/Virtue that I found in Korea
Week 13	mainstream culture	Sharing acceptance speech and wrapping up semester

5. Strength and limitation of the course

This course opens every semester as Pilot course in spring of 2013. From the survey every semester, many students replied that this course provided grasp of Korean and college culture, as well as Korean communication method. Since students get along with classmate who are in similar situations and discuss Korean culture that was hard to accept, the course has been not only practical help but also place where they experience various culture and independently receptivity.

Still, limitation of conversation with mainstream culture member –Korean students- is the main shortcoming of this course. Though there are indirect channels to approach Korean culture such as professor's opinion, episodes and video, lively debate and interchange is not possible. Different cultural adaptation stages students experience also affect the degree of comprehension on class content. Some international students do not pay attention to or possess negative stances in society and culture resulting in passive participation in class.

If we allow the Korean students who was born and raised up in Korea to participate in this course, it will maximize the effectiveness of learning environment. For Korean student, it will also be a great opportunity to broaden their experience and perspective with international students and their various cultural sensitivities.

6. Conclusion

Major difficulties that international students confront occur when they build relationships with other students and try to comprehend Korean culture, especially college culture. This is the reason why various programs for supporting the students to overcome the problems and accomplishing successful college life.

Lack of appropriate study and living program is the main cause that overseas Koreans who received education abroad for their life or foreign students entering Yonsei University get lowest grade in freshmen, and their dropout rate has been high.

'Inter-Cultural Communication for international students' in Holistic Education 2, in this context, helps foreign and overseas Korean student to smoothly adapt to college society by learning Korean cultural context and comprehending various communication manner.

Furthermore, it comes to a place where the students share their episodes and get emotional support from each other. Thus the education covers theoretical content as well as practical application since the learning content is linked to personal experience in Korea.

Nonetheless there is sufficient discussion of minorities' perspective toward mainstream society but the course has limitation when it comes to listening to social member of mainstream community on inflowing minority. Novel measure to surmount this problem is the next question whole faculty and student should solve.

<Bibliography>

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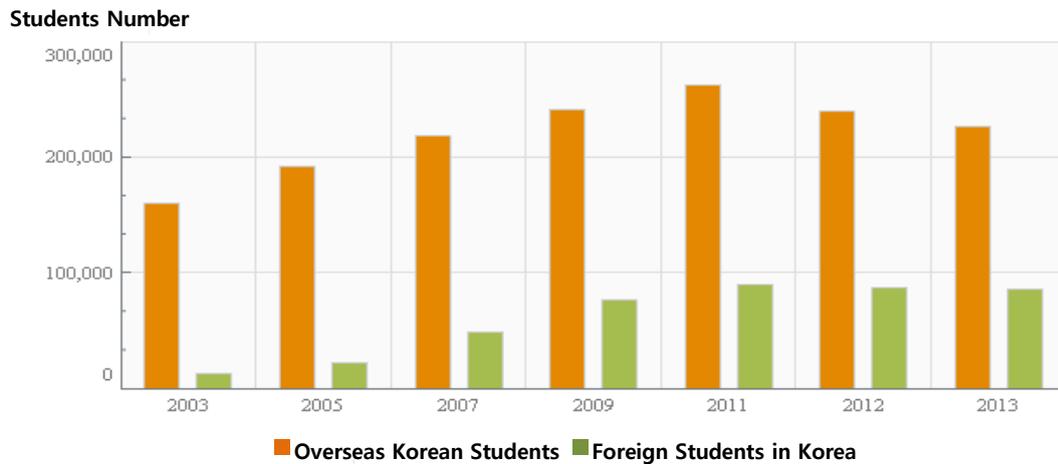
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